

Traffic Congestion & Air Quality

Winter 2005



Over one-third of the air pollutants we breathe in are from transportation sources. The rapidly worsening traffic congestion poses ongoing air quality challenges and health threats to the public — particularly to children, the elderly and other at-risk groups.

How Does Traffic Congestion Affect Our Air Quality?

Vehicles have always been a major source of emissions. Unfortunately, stop-and-go traffic produces more pollutants than free-flow traffic, and traffic isn't getting any better.

Further Threats to Mobility and Air Quality

Though air quality in Southern California has improved greatly in the last 30 years, recent air pollution data shows a disturbing upward trend. This is probably due to increases in per capital vehicle miles traveled and the rapid growth in SUV ownership. The projected increase of 6 million more people to the region by 2030, an increase in trade and goods movement, and people traveling longer distances may create massive congestion and introduce significantly more vehicle emissions into the air.

What's the Solution?

Improving Southern California's mobility and air quality will require strategic and sensible investments in a transportation infrastructure and innovative management of land use patterns in ways that will accommodate the changing travel patterns and new mobility needs of a burgeoning population. Projects that shape the region's growth along existing and improved major transportation corridors will be critical in improving the level of

congestion, saving travel time and reducing the level of pollution. It will also require a coordinated regional approach to long-term transportation planning on issues such as:

- Highways and arterials
- High Occupancy Vehicle lanes
- Mixed-flow improvements
- Regional transit
- Maglev monorail system
- Truck lanes & railroad grade crossings
- Ports and port access
- Regional aviation system
- Transportation demand management
- New Technologies

What's SCAG's Role?

SCAG is responsible for ensuring that transportation plans and programs are consistent with air quality goals as required by State and Federal rules, a process known as "transportation conformity determination." SCAG must ensure that transportation activities do not worsen air quality nor interfere with the purpose of the State's Implementation Plans (SIPs). To meet this charge, SCAG develops emissions reduction strategies for transportation planning.

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Resolving Regional Challenges

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